



TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT OF HB 6242**
AN ACT PROHIBITING SURCHARGES FROM BEING LEVIED ON UTILITY CUSTOMERS
TO SUBSIDIZE INTERSTATE NATURAL GAS PIPELINE CAPACITY

February 20, 2019

To: Honorable Chairs Sen. Needleman and Rep. Arconti and Distinguished Members of the Energy and Technology Committee

From: Lori Brown, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV)

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **IN SUPPORT OF HB 6242**, An Act Prohibiting Surcharges from Being Levied on Utility Customers to Subsidize Interstate Natural Gas Pipeline Capacity.

Natural gas has been on the decline in both Connecticut and New England, making new natural gas pipelines completely unnecessary. Because of ambitious clean energy and emissions goals set by Connecticut and our neighboring states, the use of natural gas in New England must fall by 27% by 2023. Furthermore, a 2017 study by Synapse Energy Economics found that New England's natural gas intake would decrease by 41% by 2030.

As natural gas continues to be replaced by zero- and low-emission forms of energy, it is unconscionable to ask ratepayers to foot the bill for an unnecessary pipeline. Under the Pipeline Tax, Connecticut homeowners, ratepayers, and small businesses would be forced to pick up the tab for big energy companies at a total cost of over \$6.6 billion. The Pipeline Tax is essentially consumer-subsidized corporate welfare for a project that ultimately benefits nobody but gas companies.

This type of pipeline tax has been overruled by the Massachusetts Supreme Court and rejected by the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission. In Connecticut, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) cancelled its natural gas request for proposals, referencing the unfair burden to our state's ratepayers if other states did not participate in paying for the new pipeline infrastructure.

However, the law allowing ratepayers to foot the bill for any future natural gas expansion project is still on the books. The passage of HB 6242 will protect utility customers from being forced to subsidize the cost of a needless pipeline.

Only pipeline developers stand to benefit from building this infrastructure. They will get a high, guaranteed rate of return for 20 years, funded by ratepayers, whether the pipelines are used or not. That is why they are pushing so hard for the pipeline to be built, but it would be inequitable to place corporate interests over the economic health and well-being of Connecticut families and small businesses.

It is also worth noting that fracked natural gas is **highly polluting and poses a public health threat to local communities**. These types of pipelines are prone to methane leaks, which are roughly thirty times more potent than carbon dioxide. There are over 700 known leaks in Hartford alone—which amounts to enough gas to power 215 homes a year. Leaks also increase the risk of deadly explosions, like the incident in Northeastern Massachusetts last year.

We are at a pivotal moment for energy policy. Connecticut must reduce our reliance on fossil fuels—not lock our state into a costly, needless gas pipeline. **Connecticut can reaffirm our position as a clean energy leader**, by investing in renewable technologies of the future—not dirty technologies of the past.

HB 6242 will put a stop to the onerous, ill-conceived and unnecessary Pipeline Tax. On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters, I urge you to **VOTE YES ON HB 6242**.

Thank you for your consideration as you deliberate on HB 6242.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lori Brown".

Lori Brown
Executive Director
CTLCV

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